

A photograph of a two-story brick house at night. The house has a dark roof and a light-colored brick facade. There are several windows on both floors, some of which are illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The windows are framed by dark shutters. A central door is also visible, flanked by windows. The house is partially obscured by dark, bare tree branches in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and spooky, fitting the theme of the title.

# *Haunted Montevallo*

A Class Project by the Students  
of HNRS 308: The Haunted South





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# FOREWORD

By Dr. Cathlena Martin

*Haunted Montevallo* spawned from a special topics class, “The Haunted South,” which was a one-credit hour class for Honors Program students in Fall 2021. This course represents the epitome of the Honors Program’s mission—to provide an interdisciplinary mingling of high-achieving students engaging in intellectual curiosity with expert faculty enthusiastically guiding their research. Honors students who contributed to *Haunted Montevallo* represent three of the four colleges on campus and eleven different departments. Their majors range from English and Biology to Psychology and Marketing to Speech-Language Pathology and Mass Communication. Several students added this class to their busy schedule while double majoring. These students also range from freshmen to seniors, blending collegiate knowledge and building community among the various classifications, a scenario made possible in the Honors Program through these special topic classes. And all of these students were brought together under a passionate communication instructor’s vision to collaborate on a uniquely Montevallo project using resources such as the UM Archives to explore our unconventional campus and produce the artifact that you are reading. The Honors Program provides our amazing faculty, like Dr. Jefferson Walker, a place for pedagogical experimentation outside of regular departmental boundaries. This innovative teaching enriches the academic breadth of our students and helps cultivate lifelong learning unconstrained by discipline. What they have conjured will teach you more about Montevallo’s history, all while scaring your socks off!

# INTRODUCTION

*By Dr. Jefferson Walker*

From the tragic tale of Condie Cunningham to the unusual accounts of Reynolds Hall, the University of Montevallo has no shortage of good ghost stories. But what makes our campus and the surrounding community so attractive to the supernatural?

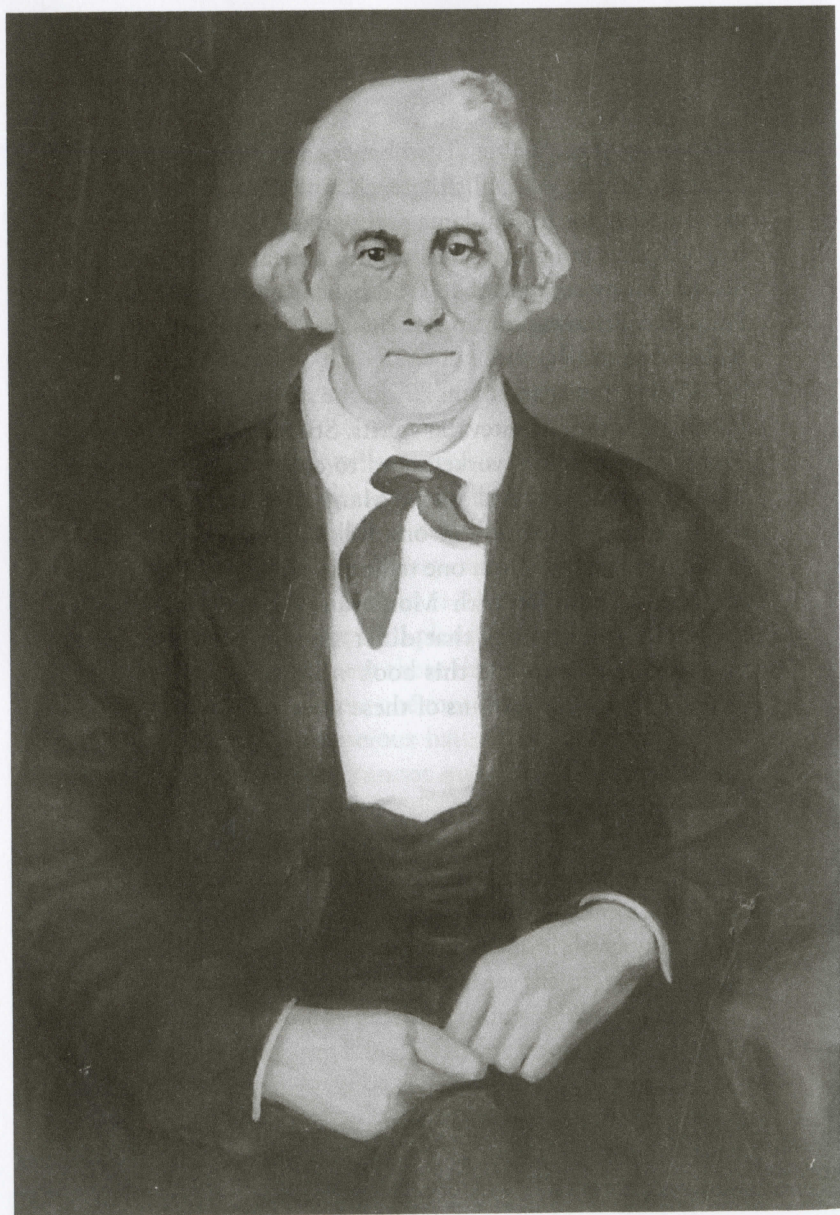
Famed Alabama storyteller Kathryn Tucker Windham—an expert on southern ghost stories if there ever was one—offers several possible explanations. She notes, “People who really study this and take it very seriously say that ghosts come back for a reason. One is to deliver a message, one is to right a wrong, and one is to plead for a proper burial.” If you look closely, you can see these themes in the stories that follow. But Windham offers one more reason that might best explain Montevallo’s numerous hauntings: “[Ghosts] love a place so much that they cannot quite leave. They want to come back to a place they love.” This theme runs through nearly all of this collection’s stories.

For example, take Edmund King, the subject of our first story. King was originally drawn to the Montevallo area’s natural beauty and potential for agricultural development in 1817. He came to love his family home, the mansion Kingswood, which still stands on the grounds of the university’s campus today. Some say King loved his home so much that his spirit never left.



Or take Dr. Walter Trumbauer, a longtime university faculty member in English, speech, and theatre. Trumbauer cared deeply for his students and worked with them on numerous plays in Palmer Auditorium, a theatre that he helped design. Many contend that Trumbauer's ghost still resides in Palmer, continuing to support the arts and the students that he loved so dearly.

Within these pages, you'll find the stories of King, Trumbauer, and other Montevallo spirits. Students in HNRS 308: The Haunted South worked hard to collect these tales from interviews and archival work. Many of these stories come from the area's tradition of oral folklore, which means that details may change from one telling to another. Readers who are already familiar with Montevallo's ghosts might have their own recollections that differ slightly from the stories told here. We hope that this book will inspire those readers to share their own versions of these tales.





# EDMUND KING:

## THE SPECTER IN SEARCH OF GOLD

*By Emily Esneault, Whitney Hamilton, and Riley Hickman*

Built in 1823, King House is the oldest structure on the University of Montevallo's campus. The Federal-style home sits in the middle of campus and students walk by with their curiosities piqued. Some students look to the house fearing they will see something that they will never forget, while others walk past the house with no regard for its history. King House was considered a mansion back in its prime throughout the 19th century. At that time, King House was a center of civilization with the windows bright in the morning all the way into the night. The house saw people coming and going with merriment as they discussed religion, art, and politics of the time. Now, it is a quiet house that serves as a reminder of times past. The house has been called by various names including the Mansion, Kingswood, Nabors Hall, and King House.

The legacy of King House begins in 1817 when Edmund King came to Montevallo in search of land that was rich and fruitful. King was a wealthy man who came from an affluent family in Virginia. Pursuing a career as a planter and merchant, he moved his small family to the middle of what was not yet the state of Alabama. Edmund King saw potential in the land. In his first years living in the area, he used slave labor, as well as the assistance of some Shoal Creek Indians, to build a small log cabin. King's enslaved people, numbering between 19-25 at any given time, then built





King's permanent house in 1823, using bricks made from local clay and imported glass windows.

Edmund King's life in Montevallo was filled with joys and tragedies. King accumulated great wealth through his fruit orchard and mercantile store. He was known to take long walks through his orchard, admiring the land that surrounded his home. These walks would often take him to the nearby family cemetery. King was the widower of two wives, Nancy and Susan.

Also buried in the cemetery was his 21-year-old son Lyttleton, who was shot by one of his brothers in a hunting accident. In his later years, King was known to spend long hours in reflection at the graves of his lost family members.

Edmund King died in 1863, during the Civil War. Stories of King's death vary considerably, ranging from his head being struck by a falling limb as he walked in his orchard to failing health from a lingering illness. Accounts of seeing King's ghost began shortly after his death, originating with King's relatives and the enslaved people who worked for them.

King's children and grandchildren told stories of a ghost haunting what had been Edmund King's upstairs bedroom. They recounted how the family would be downstairs, yet they would hear the creaking sound of someone getting out of bed and walking across the floor. They hypothesized that these sounds were the exact sounds made by Edmund King when he got older and spent his days in his bedroom.



*King House during the early 1900s*

In Kathryn Tucker Windham's retelling of the ghost story, a man called Uncle Frank, who had worked for Edmund King's youngest son, once went to investigate the sounds coming from the bedroom. As he approached, he heard "clanking sounds," as if someone was in the room counting money.

Other stories that followed King's death dealt with phantom lights around the house and cemetery. One long-standing rumor was that King had buried gold on his land to hide his fortune from the Union during the Civil War. (King's mansion housed Union calvary during Wilson's Raid.) Some have stories of witnessing ghostly lights around the property that they attribute to King's ghost, walking by lantern in search of the spot where he buried his gold. Others claim to have more directly seen King's apparition with shovel and lantern in hand. In 1976, UM Professor Frank McCoy and his students saw a shadowy figure walking outside of the house—but the "ghost" turned out to be President Kermit Johnson going around the house turning off lights.

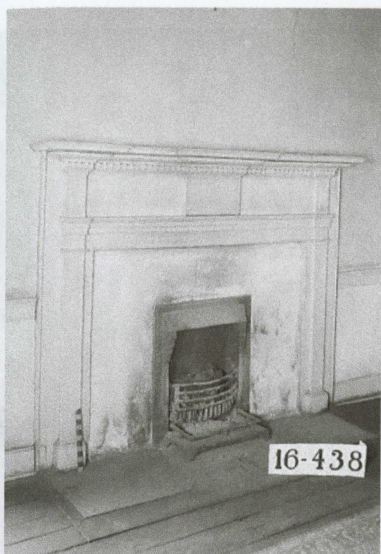




*King House, 1934*

Kathryn Tucker Windham recounts one of the more unusual tales of King House, describing a wedding feast at the home sometime in the years after King's death. As the bride, groom, and guests were waiting in the dining room for the meal, a servant brought down a roasted pig on a platter. When a bridesmaid went to carve the pig, the pig squealed, causing the guests to flee the room in fear. When they got their bearings, everyone went back inside, trying to find a logical explanation for what had occurred. As a groomsman carved the pig, a "huge white thing" rose up from the table and hovered between the bride and groom. Needless to say, no one ate dinner. In the evening, the mysterious figure appeared again and was said to float over the heads of the guests before disappearing through an open window.





As for the truth behind King House's ghost stories, Montevallo's students, faculty, staff, and visitors report strange occurrences to this day. Overnight visitors have felt cold spots around the house for no apparent reason. Students describe seeing flickering lights in the dead of night in the upstairs windows. Recent student Kensley Sandlin says "It is a tradition-like rumor on campus that at night, if you walk past King House and the lights are on, that means the ghost is home. If the ghost is home, you are not supposed to look at the house, or the ghost is said to follow you." Paranormal investigators have also paid several visits to King House throughout the years, often labeling it as the most haunted spot on campus.

*Interior of King House, 1934*





# CAPTAIN REYNOLDS: THE HAUNTED PORTRAIT

*By Sara Crippen, Jayden Presley, and Grace Pierson*

At the University of Montevallo, as at many places in the South, mythology and history walk side by side. Reynolds Hall, the grand, ghost-white building which has housed decades of classes, play rehearsals, meetings, and student events, is one of the most recognizable places where fact and folklore meet on the university campus. At that meeting point resides one of Montevallo's most famous spirits: Captain Henry Clay Reynolds.

The history of Reynolds Hall began in 1851, when the building was constructed by slave labor for the Montevallo Male Institute, a school run by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Students at the school, which became the Montevallo Male and Female Collegiate Institute in 1858, knew the building as "The Chapel." That institute would be short-lived, closing its doors during the Civil War. But where the building's initial history ends, the mythology begins.

The popular lore behind Reynolds Hall is that it was repurposed as a hospital for Confederate soldiers during the war. The story goes that the duty of defending the hospital was given to Henry Clay Reynolds, a young lieutenant in the Confederate army. Reynolds would stand watch at the entrance to the Chapel, hearing the moans and cries of injured soldiers within the makeshift hospital. Nurses left the doors wide open to ventilate the building, which was constantly at full capacity.





*Reynolds Hall was known as the Chapel for many years, having originally been built for use by the Montevallo Male Institute, in 1851. This picture depicts the building sometime before the Civil War.*

One fateful day, Reynolds was called to take his remaining men to fight in a nearby battle. With one final look at the Chapel, a feeling of dread filled his stomach. Disobeying orders was not an option. Hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst, Reynolds led his men away from the Chapel and into battle. Not long after he left, Reynolds received word that the Chapel had been overtaken by Union forces who had murdered everyone inside. He fell to his knees and wept, knowing deep down it would have stood a better chance if he and his men were present. He accepted the blame and took a solemn vow: to never leave his post again.

Some say that this vow explains a ghostly presence still felt in the building today. It's the spirit of Reynolds, still standing guard in an effort to make amends for leaving his post all those years ago.

Although this myth has been passed down through generations, the true story of Henry Clay Reynolds is less



CHAPEL AND CLASS ROOMS—1897

*A gathering outside of Reynolds Hall, 1897*

sensational. In reality, Reynolds was not stationed in Montevallo during the Civil War. And although the Chapel may have housed wounded Confederate soldiers, there are no records that indicate a mass slaughter at the site.

The true story is that Reynolds moved to Montevallo sometime after the war. Given the honorary title of Captain, Reynolds helped lobby the Alabama legislature to locate the new Alabama Girls' Industrial School in Montevallo. He was elected as the school's first president and was largely responsible for the institution's success in its tumultuous early years. Unfortunately, Captain Reynolds' presidency ended in scandal when he was asked to leave for mismanagement of school funds.



Those who know the true story often say this explains why he haunts the school today. It could be that the ghost of Reynolds, upset over how his presidency ended, remains on campus in protest.

While the real Captain Reynolds may not have been the hero of legend, stories of his ghost have thrilled generations of faculty, staff, and students. Staff who have worked in Reynolds Hall report cold spots, strange noises, the sounds of people walking around at night, and more, culminating in a feeling of unease and paranoia.

A portrait of the building's namesake has hung in Reynolds Hall for decades. It resides in the building's lobby and sometimes seems imbued with the restless spirit of its subject. Mysteriously, the portrait has been known to shift places in the night. Numerous staff members report arriving to the building early in the morning to find that the painting has moved to a new location on the walls. Some staff members believed this to be the work of pranksters, while others believed it was the ghost of Reynolds. The staff would dutifully return the portrait to its original position, only for it to be moved again soon after. After some time, the University bolted the portrait to the wall, ensuring an end to its mysterious movements.

Today, Reynolds Hall houses the admissions and alumni offices, but many of the building's ghost stories occur in the mostly deserted upper floor. This floor, once home to the theatre and communication departments, houses a now empty and disheveled theatre, creaking floors, and storage. The floor's feeling of abandonment adds to its unnerving atmosphere. Many who have rehearsed and performed in the theatre have reported strange sounds and sudden blackouts from the stage lighting. Some accounts are more bizarre and unlikely.

One unsupported tale, as told in *The Alabamian* in 1988, involves a student named "The College Night Kid." Although little is known about this individual, the story goes



that a would-be College Night performer was practicing his routine in Reynolds. When leaving the building to take his nightly medication, he saw the lingering spirit of Captain Reynolds, or perhaps another specter. Faced with the sight, the student was given a great fright and let out a scream. Other nearby cast members heard his ear-piercing scream and rushed outside to determine the cause. There lay their performance partner, dead of a heart attack.

Others, such as UM alumna and staff member Marion Brown, report more convincing experiences. As a student, Brown was working one night and felt a wash of cold, even though the heater was cranking. This cold filled her with the sense that she should leave the building immediately and, although Brown did not detect any malicious intent, she complied. When she returned the next morning, it was to a ruined office, as the roof had collapsed directly above where she had previously been sitting.

UM Director of Alumni Affairs Tiffany R. Bunt also reports a few close encounters with the resident spirits. Bunt's office is located in Reynolds and she reports frequent technological mishaps that she says could



be Captain Reynolds. Most of her unexplained encounters were as a student upstairs in what was once the PR Department and Student Publication offices which were housed in Reynolds at the time. One such tale involves a printer that seemingly refused to print. Bunt and a student worker would print from an office computer, hear the tell-tale noise of a paper being printed, but find nothing there when she checked in the printer across the hall. After a few rounds of this, Bunt devised the plan to stand near the printer while the student worker clicked the print button. As the paper was spit out, Bunt grabbed it, but felt like something was tugging at the other side. She then felt a sense of unease. Although old printers are notoriously temperamental, as Bunt asserts, they "don't pull things away from you." This and other experiences led Bunt to wonder whether supernatural causes were at play.

Marion Brown says that to avoid any issues with ghosts in the building, she developed a routine of acknowledging Captain Reynolds on a daily basis, just in case he decided to stir up trouble. Student Annslyn Pilkington follows a similar ritual. She says, "Anytime I'm just like, 'Hey Captain, it's just me—I'm gonna go soon,' he doesn't bother us and nothing happens. But if we don't tell him, he gets mad."

Unfortunately, the Captain can't always be pacified and often leaves evidence of his angry presence. Along with his more mundane manifestations of moving papers and slamming doors, Reynolds reportedly appears to some visitors as a blue figure of a man, causing great fear and disturbance. Pilkington feels that even the more frightening moments are sometimes well-intended. One night, while cleaning up after a play in the building's upstairs theatre, she and her director stepped out for a moment. Suddenly, they heard a huge crash and found the entire contents of their makeup collection dumped onto the floor. She says, "Our theory was that he was trying to warn us to get out because the weather was going to be so bad."





*Students in the 1930s gather on the steps of Reynolds Hall.*

Whether they are based on history or myth, the ghost stories of Reynolds Hall will endure as a prominent part of UM culture. For the students and staff who frequent the place every day—and for the brave explorers searching for signs of the paranormal—the ghost of Captain Reynolds will continue to make his presence known.





*Photo illustration of the door with the "Girl on Fire"*

*by Matt Orton*

# CONDIE CUNNINGHAM: THE GHOST OF THE GIRL ON FIRE

*By Grace Mitchell and Jordan Kinney*

The story of Condie Cunningham, also known as the Girl on Fire, is deeply embedded in the mythos of the University of Montevallo. Condie is said to haunt Main Hall, the oldest and largest women's residence hall on campus. Many of the students who have lived in Main throughout the years claim to have encountered Condie's spirit during their college experience. They say Condie opens and shuts doors, sets off fire alarms, moves items around, and is responsible for many other unexplainable happenings in the building. Residents of Main have also reported hearing disembodied screams and phantom footsteps running down the hallways late at night.

The truth behind this spooky story is tragic. Condie Cunningham was merely 16 years old at the time of her death in the winter of 1908. Many reports and stories of her death have been passed around, but the minutes of the Alabama College Board of Trustees Meeting provide the most accurate account.

The minutes report that Condie was up late with her roommate, making hot fudge in a chafing dish in her room on the third floor of Main Hall's West Wing. When the girls heard the lights out signal, they rushed to finish up and put everything away. In their haste, they knocked over a bottle of alcohol, which caused the flame of the chafing dish





*The West Wing of Main Hall was completed by 1897. This picture shows the structure prior to the Central Wing's completion in 1905 and the East Wing's completion in 1908.*

to spread to Condie's nightgown. Condie panicked as her clothes caught ablaze. She ran into the hallway, screaming and wailing from the pain. Teachers and students on the hall rushed to put the fire out, but Condie was badly burned. She was rushed to Birmingham for treatment and her parents were alerted. Condie passed away in the hospital two days after the events in Main Hall.

Stories of Condie's spirit haunting the residence hall began shortly after her death and continue today. Her spirit is said to be highly active and mischievous, especially at night. Some brave (or foolhardy) residents of Main entice Condie, asking her to knock on doors, move objects, or otherwise demonstrate that she is real. According to student accounts, Condie's spirit is often more active with those students who provoke her or ask her to show herself.

Grace Mitchell, a student who lived in Main Hall from



2019-2021, had two intense and terrifying experiences with what she believes to be the spirit of Condie. Grace and two of her friends were upstairs near where they believed Condie's old room to be. They were relatively new to the campus and had only heard bits and pieces of the tale. They called out to her and challenged her to make noises, open the elevator doors, or appear to them. The elevator doors opened on command several times, but nothing else happened. The girls eventually got tired and went their separate ways. Grace, the only one out of the three that lived in Main, retreated to her room and crawled into bed. It wasn't long until what she says was the most terrifying experience of her life happened.

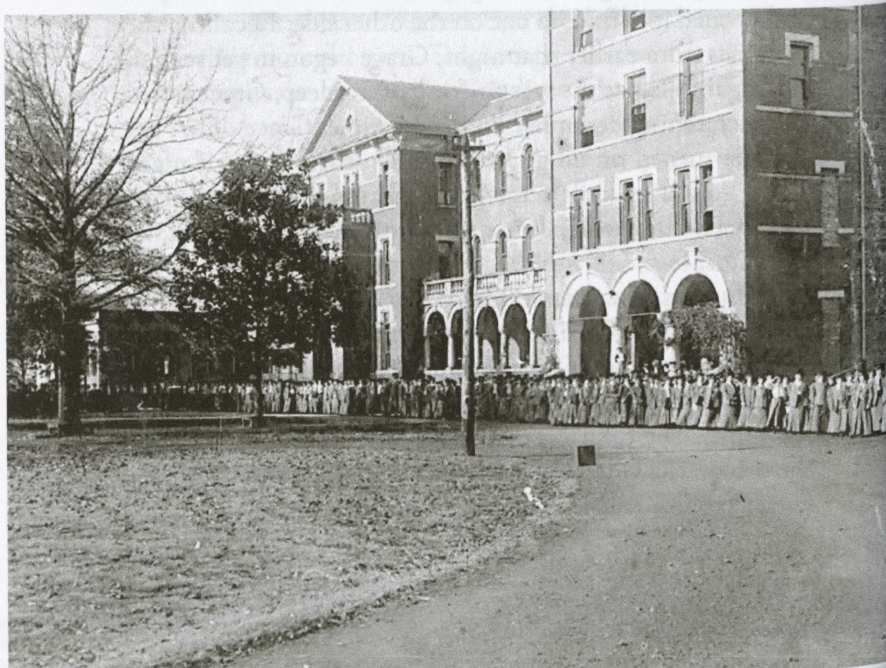
Grace was lying in bed, almost completely asleep, when she thought she heard someone knocking on her door. She opened the door, but no one was there. Puzzled by the occurrence, Grace concluded that it was most likely a friend messing with her on their way to the nearby restroom or laundry room. She dismissed it and went back to bed. But as soon as she started to fall asleep, she once again heard a sound at the door. Only this time, it sounded like the scratching of fingernails. Again, Grace went to the door and opened it to find no one on the other side. Recalling the activities from earlier that night, Grace began to get scared. And again, just as she was drifting off to sleep, Grace heard nails scratching down her door. This time, Grace didn't get up. She turned on a light and stared at the door all night as the sound of nails scratching and tapping on the door continued. The noises didn't stop until the sun came up the next morning.

Less than a year later, Grace was recording a video for a theatre class. When looking back at the video, she spotted something out of a horror movie: a spherical white orb floated over her left shoulder, in front of her face, and out of the frame. She didn't see anything while filming, so seeing the orb on the video was terrifying. She spent the night in a friend's room, unable to sleep in her own.

Rivers Haley, a student at the university and a resident of Main from 2020-2021, also had many encounters with Condie. Her experiences with Condie escalated when she was dared by one of her friends to “tempt” Condie. Rivers proceeded to ask Condie to open and close the doors and knock if she was there. Throughout that night, there were many unexplained knocks at the door. When Rivers would leave her room, she would close the door behind her, but when she returned it would be open. Almost a year after this first encounter, Rivers still had instances when her door would open on its own.

Rivers said the most intense experience she had with Condie happened one night when she was living in a single room. She was about to fall asleep around 4 a.m. when her sink room door suddenly began to open and close. The girl living in the other room connected to her sink room was home at the time, so it could not have been her. The room’s windows weren’t open, and the air conditioner was

*Main Hall, 1907*





not blowing hard enough to move the door. Rivers said the door was opening and closing throughout the night and was latching when it closed back. She could see the doorknob moving as the door opened. After some time, Rivers decided to call a friend for help. When the friend walked in, her door stopped midway open.

Rivers also recalls many incidents involving her fire alarm going off in her room, usually after dark. Whether it was the fire alarm or the door, Condie seemed to have a vendetta against Rivers that followed her through multiple room changes.

The tale doesn't end with unexplained occurrences in Main. The door to Condie's room is also an iconic part of the legend. When Condie died, an imprint of her face on fire appeared in the wood graining of the door to her room. Oral history indicates that the university replaced the door several times in an effort to remove the image, but the face continued to appear on each replacement. Eventually, the school installed a metal door in place of a wood one. The most recent wooden door resides in the university's archives and goes on display around Halloween of each year, allowing curious visitors to see the door for themselves.

With such a tragic and violent death and numerous reports from generations of students, it leaves one to wonder if there is truth to the legend of Condie's ghost. Do these students actually hear Condie running up and down the halls at night, reliving the worst night of her life? Does Condie torment the students residing in Main Hall after they provoke her? Or is she merely reaching out to find new friends since her own have passed on? We may never know, but there will always be speculation about the Girl on Fire.





# WALTER TRUMBAUER: THE AMIABLE APPARITION OF PALMER HALL

*By Brianna Bramlett, Meredith Camacho,  
and Shelby Stafford*

It had been a long day of rehearsal for the Gold Side cast members, who were hard at work staging their production for Montevallo's annual College Night tradition.<sup>1</sup> As the evening hours crept in, the fatigued Golds soldiered on. They predicted that the long hours would pay off when they faced their rivals on the Purple Side in just a few days' time. On this occasion, the Golds were rehearsing in Palmer auditorium, the long-time home of College Night. Members of the cast and crew were milling about when, suddenly, there was a commotion between people on stage.

There! Up in the balcony! The Golds spotted an unknown figure, who they had gathered had snuck in to watch their rehearsal. It must be someone from the Purple Side, spying to get a leg up on the competition! The Golds could not see who it was from the bright glow of the stage lights, so a few rushed out of the auditorium to go confront this infiltrator on the balcony. As the group raced out to climb the stairs, others stayed back on stage. Those on stage watched as the figure stayed a moment longer, got up, and walked out the

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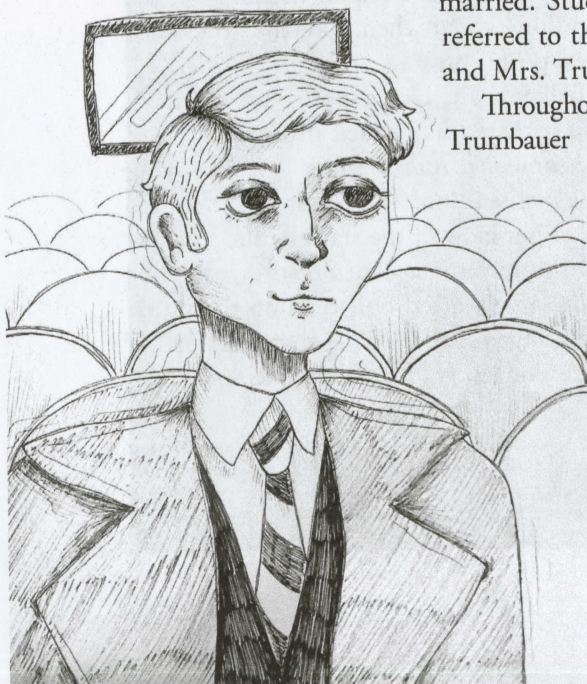
<sup>1</sup> College Night is the University's unique and long-running homecoming tradition. The student body splits into two sides represented by the school colors, purple and gold. The sides engage in a lively competition that culminates with the production of two original one-act musicals. External judges watch the musicals and decide the winner.

door to the stairwell. Only seconds later, the investigative group burst through the same door to the balcony. "Who was it?" shouted the group from the stage. But the investigators looked confused. Where did the person go? They hadn't seen anyone in the bare stairwell and now there was no one in the balcony. The group on stage swore that they had seen the intruder walk out the door, but the investigators swore that no one had passed. The groups debated and finally reached their conclusion: it was Trummie coming in for a sneak peek of his favorite Montevallo tradition.

Walter Heinrichs Trumbauer, the man whose spirit is said to haunt Palmer Hall, was born around the year 1888. Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he moved to Montevallo to work as an English professor at what was then known as Alabama College. In 1926, he met his future wife Ms. Willilee Reaves, an alumna of the college, who joined the faculty of the English Department. Students suspected a romance between the two when they overheard Ms. Reaves give Dr. Trumbauer his now famous nickname, Trummie. Students' suspicions proved correct and the two were soon

married. Students affectionately referred to the two as Trummie and Mrs. Trummie.

Throughout his life, Dr. Trumbauer had always held a vested interest in the theatrical arts. In addition to teaching English, Trumbauer taught theatre, directed student productions, and founded a high school drama festival in 1923 (a festival







*A production in Palmer Auditorium*

that continues today as the Walter Trumbauer High School Theatre Festival). Additionally, Trumbauer was instrumental in the development of College Night. Dr. Trumbauer was known for recruiting students to participate and for taking a hands-on role in helping them stage their productions. Both Walter and Willilee Trumbauer served as caretakers for College Night throughout their tenure at the university. Dr. Trumbauer's impact was especially profound. In her book *Years Rich and Fruitful*, Mary Frances Tipton writes, "The many students...who studied under Trummie and tried to please him were inspired to excel and gave cult-like devotion to him and his high standards."

Dr. Trumbauer was also instrumental in the design of Palmer Hall, which began construction in the 1920s. The new building was intended to replace Reynolds as the campus's chapel and central gathering place. Trumbauer found



*The Lobby of Palmer Hall*





*Palmer Hall*

inspiration for the new building while honeymooning with his wife in Europe. The pair visited the Volksbühne, an iconic theatre in Berlin, which would serve as a model for Palmer Hall's auditorium. The auditorium's design would allow for over a thousand spectators and would feature a large stage, an orchestra pit, and a grand pipe organ. The building opened in 1930 and was named for the university's third president, Thomas Palmer, who passed away three years prior. Although Trumbauer was instrumental in the auditorium's design, his name was omitted from the list of contributors inscribed on the building.

Walter Trumbauer's physical body is laid to rest in the Montevallo Cemetery, but his spirit still roams the halls of Palmer Auditorium, enjoying the arts that he had a hand

in creating on campus. Some believe that Trummie haunts Palmer Hall today due to being miffed at his name being left off the building. However, most believe that he remains in Palmer because of his love and devotion to College Night. Whatever the reason for his prolonged stay, Trummie is said to be an amiable apparition who makes his presence known in a variety of ways.

Trummie is known to make mischief at theatrical rehearsals and performances, making noises, moving props, and adjusting lighting cues. Some students claim to have spotted Trummie's image, while others say they have heard his voice. On one occasion, a student was practicing playing the organ late at night, in what she believed to be an empty auditorium. When she saw how late it was, she realized she needed to go home. But when she began to leave, she heard a voice say, "Don't stop playing!"

While the voice the young musician heard may have been Trummie's, it could also have belonged to another spirit. Over the years, there have been reports of seeing the reflections of spirits wearing old-fashioned costumes in the mirrors of Palmer's downstairs dressing rooms. Some believe these are the spirits of former students, reliving past theatrical productions. Alumna Mary Howard tells the story of a dressing room mirror, which was securely positioned against a wall, suddenly shattering face down against the floor. When recounting the story, Mary insists that the mirror was leaning against the wall at such an angle that its fall could not have occurred due to gravity alone. Something—or someone—must have pushed the mirror down.

Unsurprisingly, Trummie and the other spirits are most active during College Night season. Trummie is best known for predicting College Night's outcome each year. Many participants look for signs of Trummie's approval during their final dress rehearsal, where Trummie is said to swing the battens above the stage in the direction of the side that he believes will win that year's competition. Others believe





*Palmer Hall*

they have also seen Trummie make his predictions through rippling banners, turning statues, or swaying chandeliers. Regardless of the method, Trummie always finds a way to make his opinion known. And just as his students sought Trummie's approval in life, students today seek the approval of his spirit. While some accounts of his spirit differ, there's one thing that Purples and Golds all agree on: Trummie is a benevolent spirit, showing his love for theatre and supporting the place he loved so dearly.



*Hanson Hall entrance*

marriage, the couple moved to Montgomery, where Weenona taught and played the organ for Montgomery's First Presbyterian Church. In 1909, after the two moved to Birmingham, Mrs. Hanson continued her involvement in her church and community, taking part in several different clubs and officer roles that her town had to offer. Several of these positions also focused on her passion: music. Mrs. Hanson helped found the Alabama Federation of Music Clubs and established several music scholarships at Judson College and the Agnes Scott Institute. Mrs. Hanson died on January 14, 1933, from a cerebral hemorrhage, but her memory lived on through the naming of Hanson Hall.

Although Mrs. Hanson never resided in the building, her ghost is said to wander the halls as a dorm mother of sorts. One student who lived on the first floor of the building said she had an odd and frightening encounter with Mrs. Hanson. The student was taking a shower one evening in the dorm's communal bathroom, which was empty except for her at the time. The large bathroom door was heard swinging open, then closed. Afterwards, the student heard the door in the next stall creak open, as though someone else had entered. No water began, and no one was heard leaving the room. The student remained alone.



Another encounter involved the same student and her friend. The pair were in one of their rooms when a knock was heard against the wall, coming from the room next door. The two girls were confused, as the room beside the one they were in was vacant and locked to keep others from entering. They found their resident advisor (RA) to see if she could check the room, swearing they heard someone in there. As the RA unlocked the door, they found the room empty and the windows locked.

These students, as well as others, firmly believe that Mrs. Hanson continues to walk the floors of the building as a hall mother that is never off-duty. She is believed to assume a strict parental-like role, watching over the residents, and ensuring they are well-behaved. Although students' encounters with the ghost may seem frightening at times, the energy inside of Hanson Hall is a warm and welcoming one, providing a place of safety to the students who live there.

## THE HIGH SCHOOL'S SPIRIT

*By Ari King*

Montevallo High School has a history that intertwines with the university's, as the school has moved from building to building in sites adjoining and adjacent to the campus. The school moved to its current site, just across the street from Palmer Hall and Carmichael Library, in 1930. Originally, the school building's central structure contained nine classrooms for grades 7-12. The wings of the building, containing additional classrooms, were completed in the 1940s and a gymnasium was added in 1964. The gymnasium was dedicated to Susie DeMent, a beloved graduate and former teacher at the school, in 1978. In 1990, the school was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The school shows its spirit through its mascot, the bulldog, and school colors, orange and blue. But some say that another type of spirit also dwells in the school.

Mary Howard, a former English and Theatre teacher at the school, claims to have experienced a plethora of strange or supernatural occurrences. She and her students attribute these experiences to a ghost they named Jamie. In the classroom, Howard would sometimes ask students to close the door. The door would then close by itself. Other teachers reported similar incidents, with a former band director having the experience of leaving the building but coming back because he saw something unusual happening in the window of his classroom. Upon returning to check if a student had broken in, he discovered that the door was locked. No one was in the room, not a thing out of sorts.

Jamie made additional appearances in the school's performing arts center. On one occasion, Mrs. Howard asked her introductory theatre students to clean the dressing rooms. Afterwards, she checked on their work and was pleased with how perfectly neat and organized they had left the space. Later that day, she told her advanced theatre class about it and encouraged them to check it out. What they discovered was quite the opposite of their expectations: the rooms were utterly destroyed, although they had been locked all day. Another time, during a rehearsal for a play, the sound system suddenly stopped working and the glass of the lighting and sound booth shattered without warning. That same day, a student had been taking pictures in the theatre and claimed to have photographed the image of a girl floating above the stage. Mrs. Howard and the students attributed each of these incidents to Jamie.

Many teachers, students, and staff members have their own accounts of seeing ghostly figures or orbs in the high school. They have offered up different explanations for the sightings and have even called the spirits different names (some more recent students refer to the theatre's ghost as Danny). Although there are no records of any tragedies that would warrant a haunting, the numerous accounts point towards the supernatural.





*Illustration of the "Lady in Yellow"*

## THE LADY IN YELLOW

*By Kaitie Wayne*

On a late night in southern Alabama, a student at the University of Montevallo is exploring the campus. When passing through Main Quad, the student glances toward the infamous Sigma Rock. The large, brooding monument is covered in layers of paint. Despite its varying hues splattered on the rock, the individual colors are difficult to see, but one thing is impossible to miss: the figure of a woman in yellow near the rock.

Traditions can help bring generations together and blur the lines between the past and present. One UM tradition that allows various student groups to express themselves is the

painting of a rock in the middle of campus. Called the Sigma Rock by the student body, it is often painted by various fraternities, sororities, and other groups. While it is a seemingly harmless activity, one ghost of the campus may feel otherwise.

There is a rumored "Lady of the Rock" or "Lady in Yellow" that haunts the area surrounding the rock. Many who claim to have seen the woman say she floats around Main and King Quads, in search of a long-lost love. The ghost is not thought to be malicious, but instead glides through the air and stands on the rock in an eerily peaceful manner. She gazes far into the distance, scanning for her love.

The exact origin of the Lady in Yellow is unclear, but she is believed to be a spirit from the Civil War era. Students believe that the woman is waiting for her husband who went to war and never returned.

Those who encounter the Lady in Yellow experience the translucent figure lingering over the paint-sprinkled landmark, halted in a state of sorrow and solitude. Perhaps she stands as a reminder that even in death, someone will look for you and remember you.

## THE PHANTOMS OF FARRINGTON HALL

*By Asa Costa*

On a Saturday in 2013, members of Spirit Communications and Research of Alabama, also known as SCARE, visited Farrington Memorial Hall in Aldrich, a small community within Montevallo, to search for paranormal activity. During their investigation, SCARE heard voices through their modified radio, which they called a Spirit Box. The spirits reportedly gave their names, revealed that they worked in the coal industry, and interacted with SCARE's equipment when asked. This is just one account of many that have come from Farrington Hall.





*Illustration of a phantom at Farrington Hall*

Aldrich got its start as a mining community in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, where coal was mined with hard labor and sold all over the south. Truman Aldrich purchased the land in 1875, and his brother William Aldrich became the principal stockholder of the mines in 1882. William, along with his wife Josephine, constructed the Rajah Lodge, a beautiful estate with fish pools and gardens. One building on this estate was designed as a library and office for William Aldrich's personal use, while the basement had accommodations for his adopted son, Farrington, to work on automobiles and other mechanical devices. Aldrich even commissioned murals in the building from the Italian artist Giuseppe Moretti, known for designing Birmingham's sculpture of Vulcan. In 1908, at the age of nineteen, Farrington Aldrich contracted typhoid fever while cleaning a mosquito-infested mine reservoir. He passed on July 7, 1908, and later in the year, when the library's construction was completed, William Aldrich

named it Farrington Memorial Hall. According to some reports, Farrington's body was cremated in the basement of the building.

While the grand Rajah Lodge may no longer stand, Farrington Hall still remains, with more than a few strange reports. Doors, locked and unlocked, have been witnessed opening by themselves, sometimes forcefully. Dolls, high on shelves, are often found to have been turned around, and Henry Emfinger, the owner of the Aldrich Coal Mine Museum and Farrington Hall, reported a record player started on its own in an empty room. Mrs. Emfinger, as well as her daughter, reported the smell of lilac in the building, despite the absence of the plant around the building; it was later discovered that Josephine Aldrich had favored lilacs and built a greenhouse at Rajah Lodge solely to grow the plants. Still others continue to see shadows or lights in or near the building on quiet nights.



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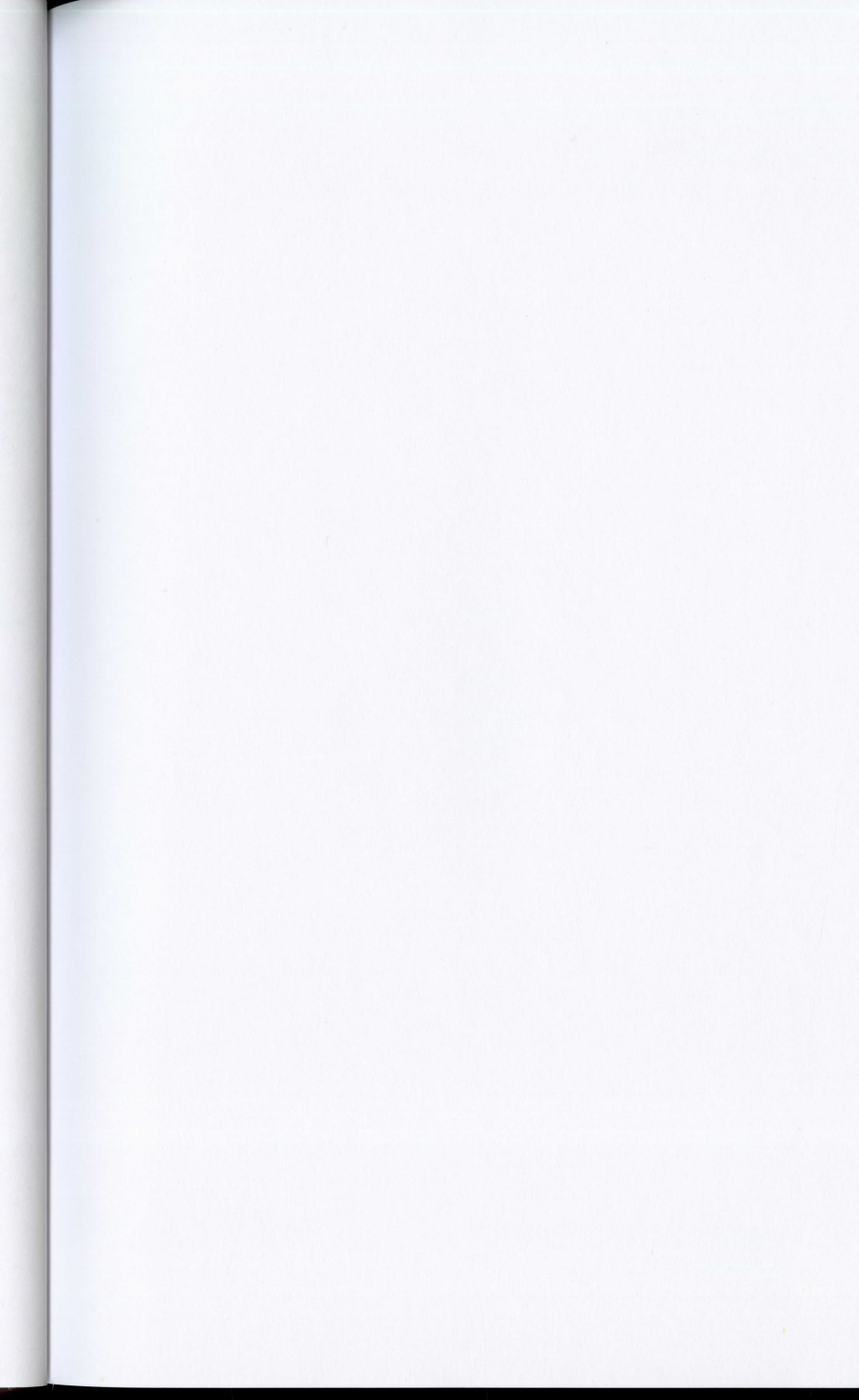
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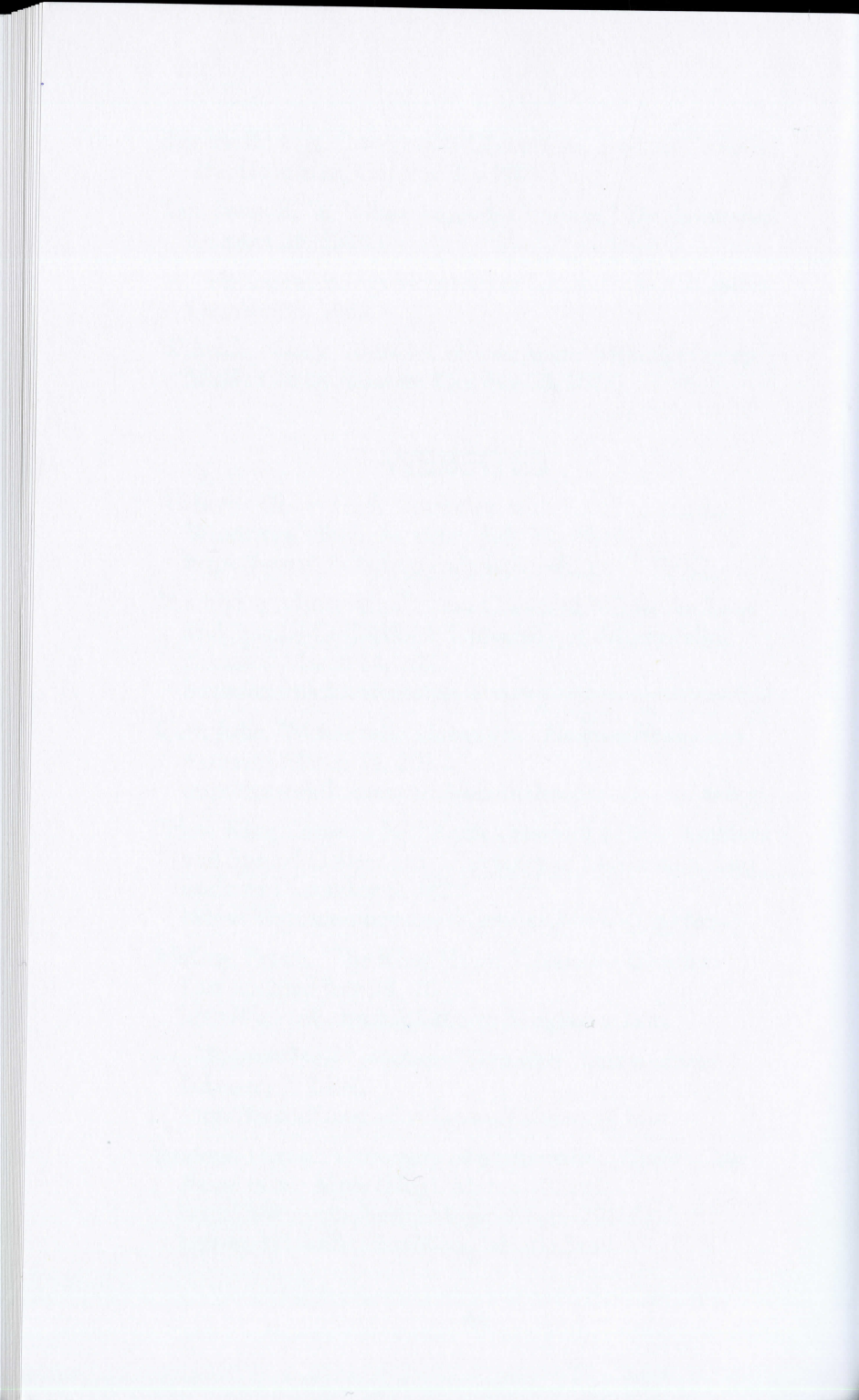
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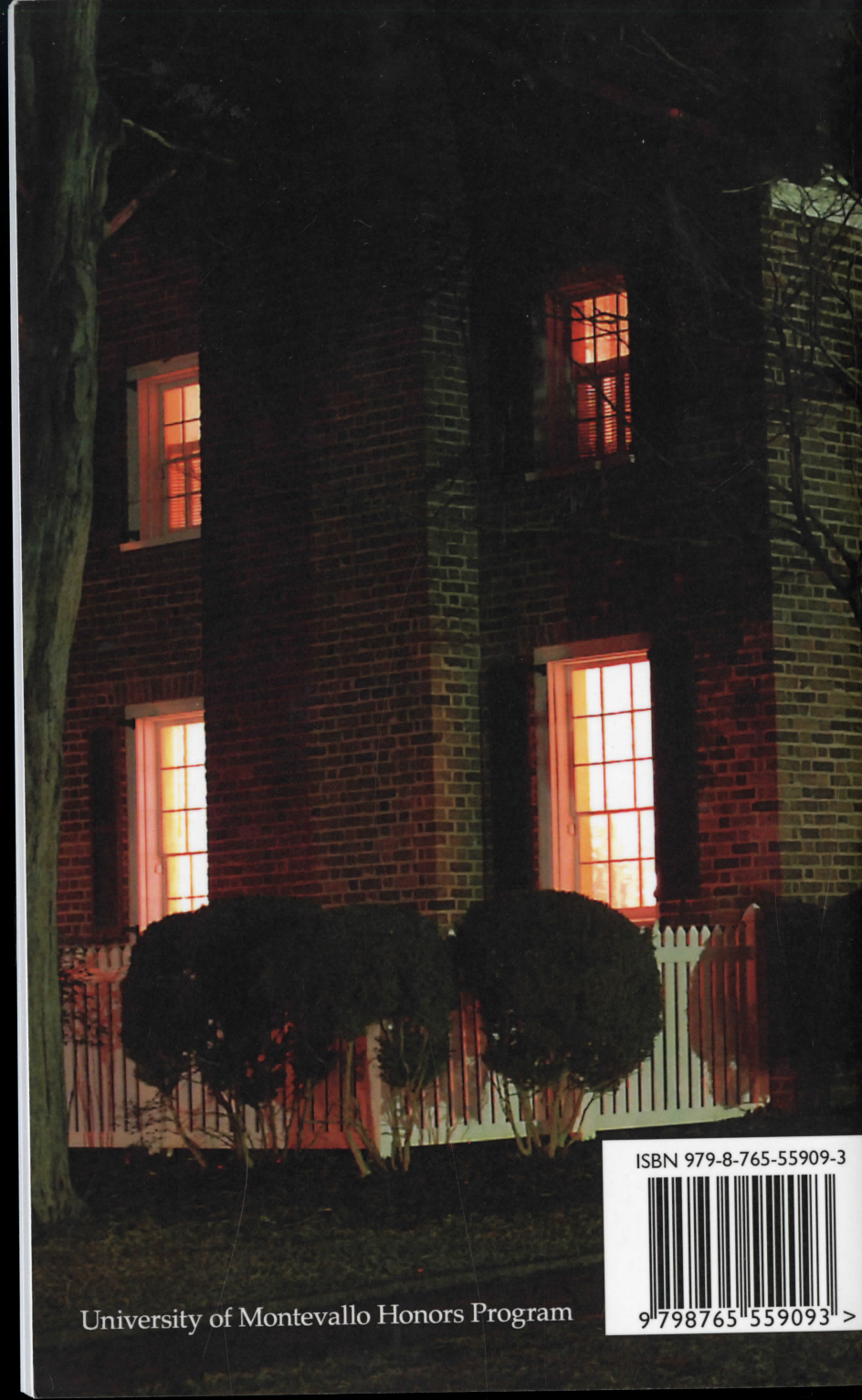


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